

The European Union – Uzbekistan: Sustainable Energy Days 2024

Workshop: Unlocking EU-CA Research Cooperation under Horizon Europe

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Evaluation of Horizon Europe proposals

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Criteria for selecting the evaluators

- Online registration of the reviewer
- Performance of the reviewer
 - Qualification
 - Experience in the reviewing process
 - Publications
 - Patents
- Availability of the candidate during the reviewing process

Confidentiality

- Not discuss evaluation matters (e.g. content of proposals, evaluation results or opinions of fellow experts) with anyone, including:
 - Other experts or EU staff or any other person (e.g. colleagues, students...) not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal
 - The sole exception: Your fellow experts who are evaluating the same proposal in a consensus group or Panel review
- Not contact partners in the consortium, sub-contractors or any third parties
- Not disclose names of your fellow experts
- Maintain confidentiality of documents, paper or electronic, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work (on-site or remotely)
 - Please take nothing away from the evaluation building (be it paper or electronic)
 - Return, destroy or delete all confidential documents, paper or electronic, upon completing your work, as instructed

Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest is present, if the reviewer:

- was involved in the preparation of the proposal
- stand to benefit directly/indirectly, if the proposal is successful or fails
- has a close family/personal relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity
- is a director/trustee/partner of an applicant or involved in the management of an applicant's organization
- is employed or contracted by an applicant or a named subcontractor
- is a member of an Advisory Group or Programme Committee in an area related to the call in question
- is a National Contact Point or are directly working for the Enterprise Europe Network
- is involved in a competing proposal

Evaluation criteria

Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art • Soundness of the proposed concept, model, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender balance in research & innovation content, the quality of open science practices including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work program, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions of the project • Suitability and quality of the measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall • Capacity and role of each participant, and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise

Individual evaluation

- Read the proposal and evaluate it against the evaluation criteria, without discussing it with anybody else and as submitted and not on its potential if certain changes were to be made.
- Complete an Individual Evaluation Report (IER)
 - Evaluate each proposal as submitted and not on its potential if certain changes were to be made
 - If you identify shortcomings (other than minor ones and obvious clerical errors), reflect those in a lower score for the relevant criterion. Proposals with significant weaknesses that prevent the project from achieving its objectives or with resources being seriously over-estimated must not receive above-threshold scores
 - Provide comments and scores for all evaluation criteria (scores must match comments)
 - Explain shortcomings, but do not make recommendations (e.g. no additional partners, work packages, resource cuts)
 - Sign and submit the form in the electronic system

Proposal scoring, thresholds and weighting

- Evaluation scores are awarded for the criteria, and not for the different aspects in each criterion.
- You provide a score in the range from 0-5 to each criterion based on your comments. Maximum score for a proposal is 15
 - The whole range of scores should be used. Use steps of 0.5
 - Scores must pass the individual threshold AND the overall threshold if a proposal is to be considered for funding within the limits of the available call budget
- Thresholds apply to individual criteria and to the total score. The default threshold for individual criteria is 3 and the default overall threshold is 10 (unless specified otherwise in the WP)
- For the first stage of a two-stage procedure, you only evaluate the criteria Excellence and Impact. The threshold for both individual criteria is 4
- The level of overall threshold will be set at a level that ensures the total requested budget of proposals admitted to stage 2 is as close as possible to three times the available budget, and not less than two and a half times the available budget
- Weighting: scores are normally NOT weighted. Weighting is used for some types of actions — and only for the ranking (not to determine if the proposal passed the thresholds)
- Specific calls or topics may have different rules regarding thresholds and weighting
- For Innovation actions, the criterion Impact is given a weight of 1.5 to determine the ranking

Interpretation of scores

The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information

- **Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- **Fair.** The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
- **Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
- **Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
- **Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor

Score descriptors

- A '**minor shortcoming**' is an issue that relates only to a marginal aspect of the proposal with respect to the criterion and/or can easily be rectified (it will not impact the scoring)
- A '**shortcoming**' is a problem that relates to an important aspect of the proposal. It impacts the scoring but does not render the proposal inappropriate for funding, i.e. the proposal is still expected to lead to useful results with positive impact
- A '**significant weakness**' means that the proposal addresses the criterion in a limited and/or not sufficiently effective way (will lower the score below threshold)
- This can also be the case when the proposal includes a large number of shortcomings, each one of them not rendering the proposal inappropriate for funding, though all together make the proposal not addressing the criterion sufficiently in an effective way

Open Science

Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process, including active engagement of society.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing).• Research output management including research data management (RDM).• Measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs.• Providing open access to research outputs (e.g. publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows) through deposition in trusted repositories.• Participation in open peer review.• Involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandatory in all calls: Open access to publications; RDM in line with the FAIR principles including data management plans; open access to research data unless exceptions apply ('as open as possible as closed as necessary'); access and/or information to research outputs and tools/instruments for validating conclusions of scientific publications and validating/re-using data.• Additional obligations specific to certain work programme topics. Reflect both in lower score when not sufficiently addressed• All open science practices beyond mandatory Evaluate positively when sufficiently addressed. |
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When OS practices are duly justified as not appropriate for the project, do not lower score for not addressing those practices Detailed guidance for proposers and evaluators in the HE Programme Guide

Gender dimension

Under Horizon Europe the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content is mandatory, unless it is explicitly mentioned in the topic description as for example: “In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.”

Why is gender dimension important? It brings added value of research in terms of excellence, rigor, reproducibility, creativity and business opportunities It enhances the societal relevance of research and innovation.

- Why do we observe differences between women and men in infection levels and mortality rates in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Does it make sense to design car safety equipment only on the basis of male body standards?
- Is it responsible to develop AI products that spread gender and racial biases due to a lack of diversity in the data used in training AI applications?
- Is it normal that household travel surveys, and thus mobility analysis and transport planning, underrate trips performed as part of caring work?
- Did you know that pheromones given off by men experimenters, but not women, induce a stress response in laboratory mice sufficient to trigger pain relief?
- Did you know that climate change is affecting sex determination in a number of marine species and that certain populations

Evaluation criteria:

Management of intellectual property (IP)

Each Horizon Europe beneficiary shall use its best efforts to exploit the results it owns, or to have them exploited by another legal entity, in particular through the transfer and licensing of results. In this respect beneficiaries are required to adequately protect their results – if possible and justified – taking account of possible prospects for commercial exploitation and any other legitimate interest.

The strategy for IP management in a proposal

- Should be comprehensive, feasible, and should include protection measures whenever relevant.
- Should be commensurate with the described pathways to outcomes and impacts and therefore underpins the ‘credibility’ of these pathways.
- Should consider ‘freedom to operate’ regarding the background owned by consortium members and/or third parties outside the consortium.
- Should give due thought to balancing between publication of results and plans to protect IP, e.g. in terms of timing the respective activities, involvement of IP experts.
- If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, it must include justifications on how that exploitation is still in the Union’s interest.
- if required in the call conditions, it must consider additional exploitation obligations in relation to IP.

Evaluation criteria: **Criterion 3 - Quality and efficiency of the implementation**

- Is the work plan of good quality and effective?
- Does it include quantified information so that progress can be monitored?
- Does it follow a logic structure (for example regarding the timing of work packages)?
- Are the resources allocated to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables?
- Are critical risks, relating to project implementation, identified and proper risk mitigation measures proposed?

Evaluation criteria: **Consensus report**

- **The rapporteur is responsible for drafting the consensus report (CR).** The rapporteur includes consensus comments and scores and in some cases does not take part in the discussion.
- **The quality of the CR is of utmost importance.** It will be the basis for the **evaluation summary report (ESR)** sent to applicants together with the evaluation result letters. It often remains unchanged at the panel stage, so in most of the cases ESRs are identical to CRs.
- The aim of the CR is to give:
 - A **clear assessment** of the proposal based on its merit, with justification.
 - Clear feedback on the proposal's **weaknesses and strengths**, of an adequate length, and in an appropriate tone.
 - **Explain shortcomings**, but not to make recommendations.

Evaluation criteria: Proposals with identical scores

For each group of proposals with the same score, starting with the group achieving the highest score and continuing in descending order:

1. Proposals that address **aspects of the call that have not otherwise been covered** by more highly ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority.
2. The proposals identified under 1), if any, will themselves be prioritized according to the **scores** they have been awarded for 'Excellence'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for 'Impact'. In the case of 'Innovation actions', priority will be given to the score for 'Impact', followed by that for 'Excellence'.
3. If necessary, the **gender balance** among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities, and who are included in the researchers table in the proposal, will be used as a factor for prioritisation.
4. If necessary, any further prioritization will be based on **geographical diversity**, defined as the number of Member States or Associated Countries represented in the proposal, not otherwise receiving funds from projects higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget).
5. If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering **other factors** related to the objectives of the call, or to Horizon Europe in general. These may include, for example, enhancing the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects or, where relevant and feasible, involving SMEs.